

# Preaching to the Choir?: How Academic Librarians Really Feel About Open Access

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Image courtesy of IUPUI Digital Collections, Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives

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# Song we'll sing

- Why research librarian attitudes?
- Research methodology
- Results
- What the results may mean to the profession but specifically to open access supporters
- Considerations for action
- Future studies

# First, what is open access (OA)?

- Defined on survey as, “Scholarship that is available online free of charge.”
- BOAI  
<http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml>
- Peter Suber  
<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/writing/acrl.htm>

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# Why study OA?

- It's everywhere today!
- Preponderance of anecdotal writing about OA, fewer empirical studies
- Help us personally/professionally in knowing what others are experiencing in working with OA
- Ultimate goal: Do librarians believe they should be involved in supporting and promoting OA? If so, HOW?

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# Why study librarian attitudes?

- Many librarians are very active in OA projects, but little is known about other librarians' desire to be involved
- Knowing how librarians really feel will help shape the dialogue among librarians, library associations, and between librarians and other faculty
- Describing which projects and ideas are more accepted may illustrate where it is best to focus present efforts

# Methods

- Grant funded
- Literature review
- First obstacle—finding sample and how to distribute survey
- Survey creation
  - Very time consuming
  - Vetted survey to library colleagues and social psychologist co-author
  - Zoomerang



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# Methods, cont.

- Data collection took place over 5 wk. period
  - Reminder at three weeks
- Before data was analyzed, we created our “research questions”
- Data was analyzed using SPSS and Zoomerang



# What we asked the respondents

- What do you think about academic library involvement in OA in general?
- What do you think about academic library involvement in specific types of OA projects?
- Are you involved in OA
- Is your library involved in OA?
- Demographics



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# Findings Related to Opinions and Action

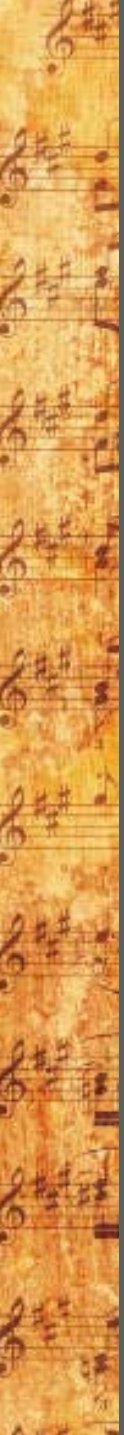
Do respondents' opinions about OA have any correlation to how often they read or talk about OA?

- Yes, there is a statistically significant correlation between OA attitudes and OA actions. It's a positive correlation, showing that more positive attitudes are related to more frequent actions.

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How do respondents' institutions' involvement in the management of OA projects relate to respondents' opinions about OA?

- There is only a significant effect for lack of involvement. Those institutions not involved in OA projects had employed librarians with less positive attitude scores.
- The same is not true for the other end of the spectrum.

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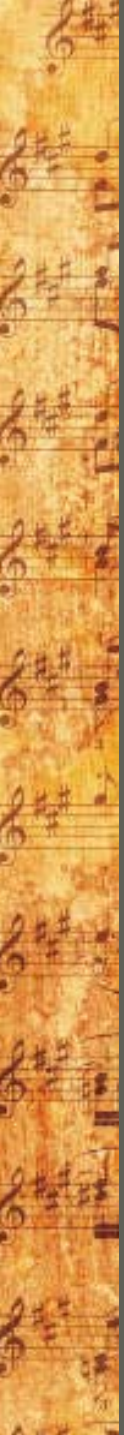
How do respondents' involvement with the management of OA projects relate to their opinions about OA?

- Individuals managing OA digital repositories and/or OA journals do not have a significantly more positive attitude toward OA
- BUT individuals involved in an OA education campaign do have more positive attitudes toward OA.

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How do respondents' involvement with the management of OA projects relate to how often they read or talk about OA?

- Same pattern for actions as for attitudes – people involved in educational campaigns read or talk about OA more often

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How do respondents' institutions' involvement in the management of OA projects relate to how often respondents read or talk about OA?

- Institutions involved in education campaigns and OA journal management had high actions scores (more frequent behaviors) than other groups
- Places with no involvement had lowest scores.

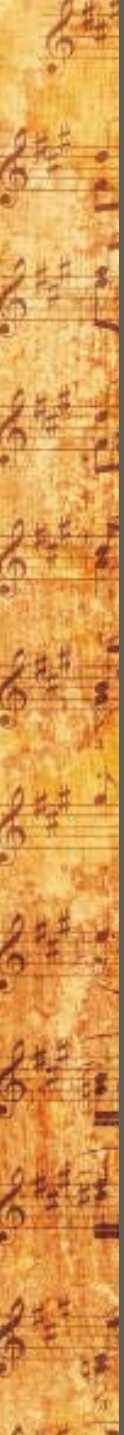
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# Personal & Institution Characteristics

Does amount of time spent as a librarian have any correlation with respondents' involvement in the management of OA projects?

- People who are personally involved in managing digital repositories have been librarians for fewer years ( $M = 13.075$  years) than people not involved in managing the digital repositories ( $M = 18.612$  years)



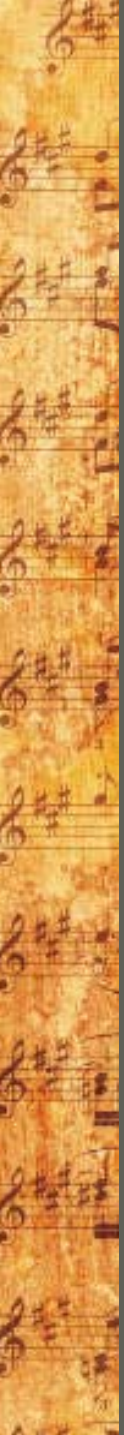
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Does amount of time spent as a librarian have any correlation to respondents' opinions about OA?

- number of years spent as a librarian doesn't have any influence on OA attitudes

Does amount of time spent as a librarian have any correlation with how often respondents read or talk about OA?

- number of years spent as a librarian doesn't have any influence on how often respondents read or talk about OA

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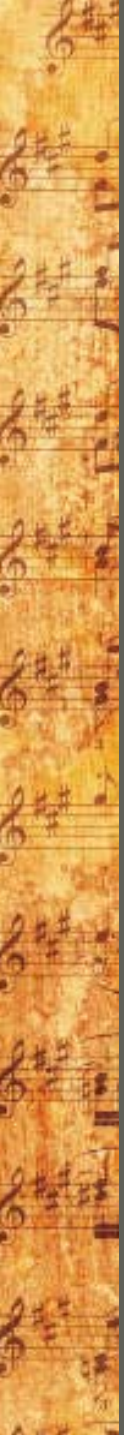
# Does tenure status have any correlation with respondents' involvement in the management of OA projects?

- Just comparing yes/no on personal involvement in managing OA, nothing is significant with tenure status.
- 81% of respondents involved in OA repositories are in positions that do NOT require that they obtain tenure.
- 70% of respondents involved in OA journals are in positions that do NOT require that they obtain tenure.

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Do respondents' reported primary position types have any relationship to respondents' opinions about OA?

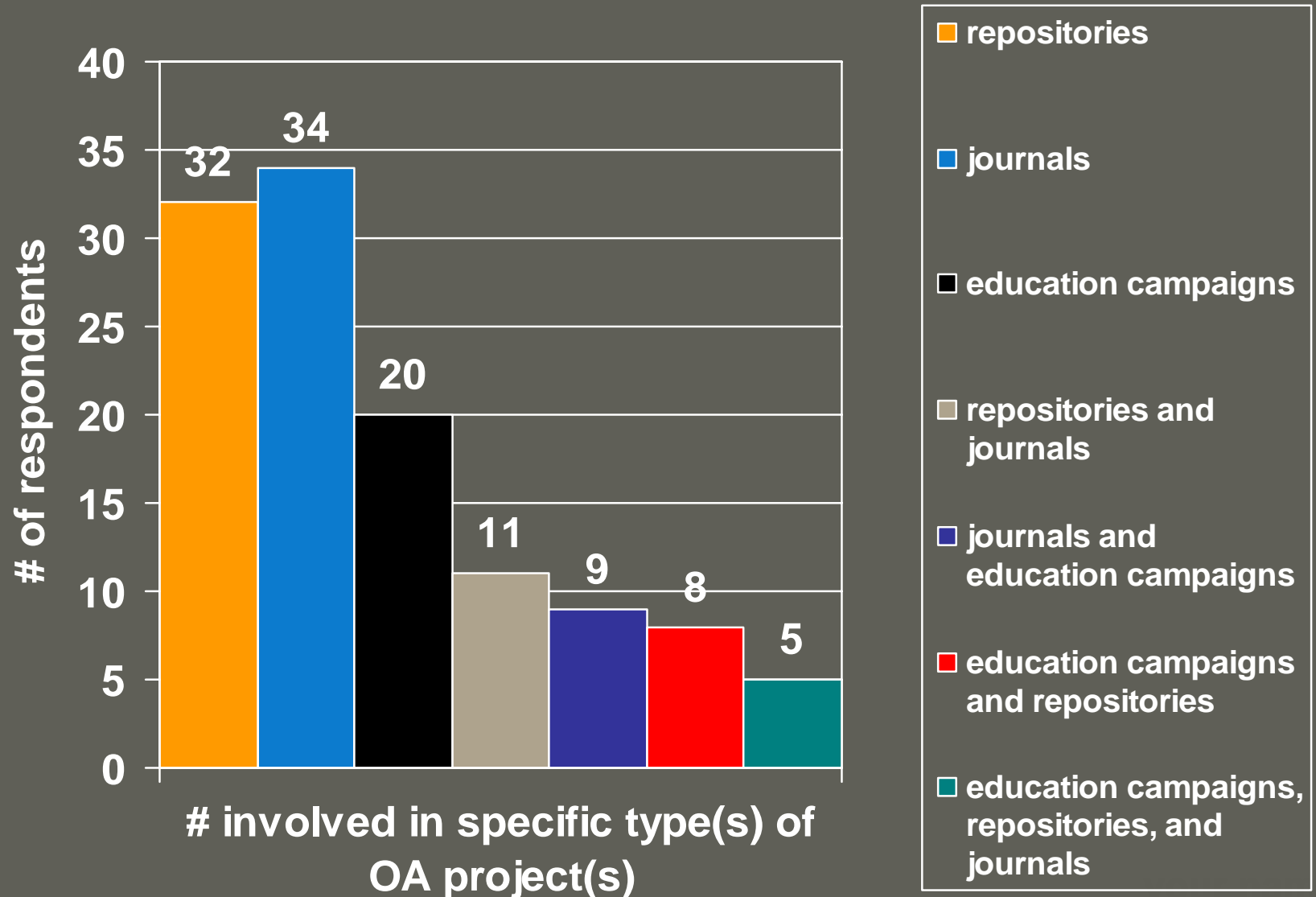
- Ignoring those who marked “others”, position type does have an impact on attitudes toward OA
- When comparing different position types, Acquisitions and Public Services people both stood out as having less positive attitudes than many other position types.

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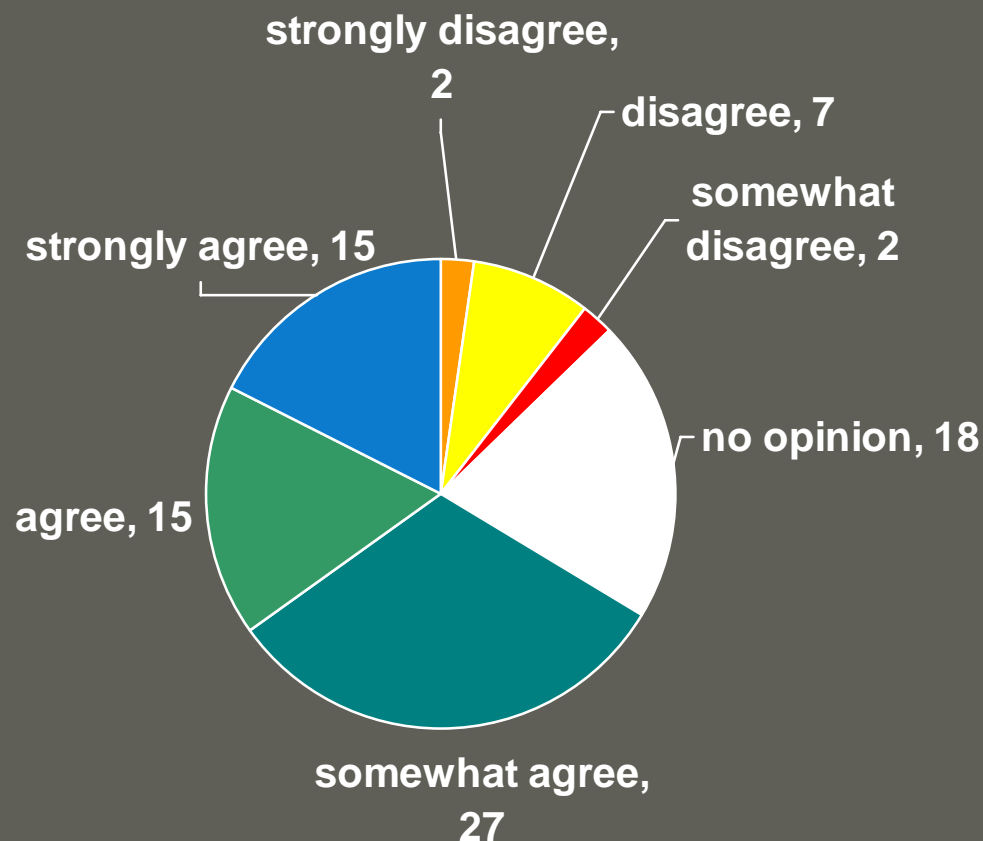
Does the highest level of degree granted by respondents' institutions have any relationship to the institutions' involvement in the management of OA projects?

- There is a relationship between highest degree offered and institutional involvement in OA projects, with PhD granting institutions being more likely to be involved in managing OA projects than other institutions.

# Likelihood of being personally involved in more than one OA project



How do respondents who reported that they were personally involved in OA projects feel about having a professional position in academic libraries, devoted to OA issues and projects?



**Total of 86  
respondents  
personally  
involved in at  
least one OA  
project**



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# Concepts Supported

- **78% of respondents agree or strongly agree academic libraries should take actions to shape the future of scholarly communication**
- **78% of respondents also agree or strongly agree that the principles of OA relate to the purpose of academic libraries**
- **81% of respondents agree or strongly agree involvement in OA initiatives is one way for academic libraries to remain relevant**

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# Actions Supported

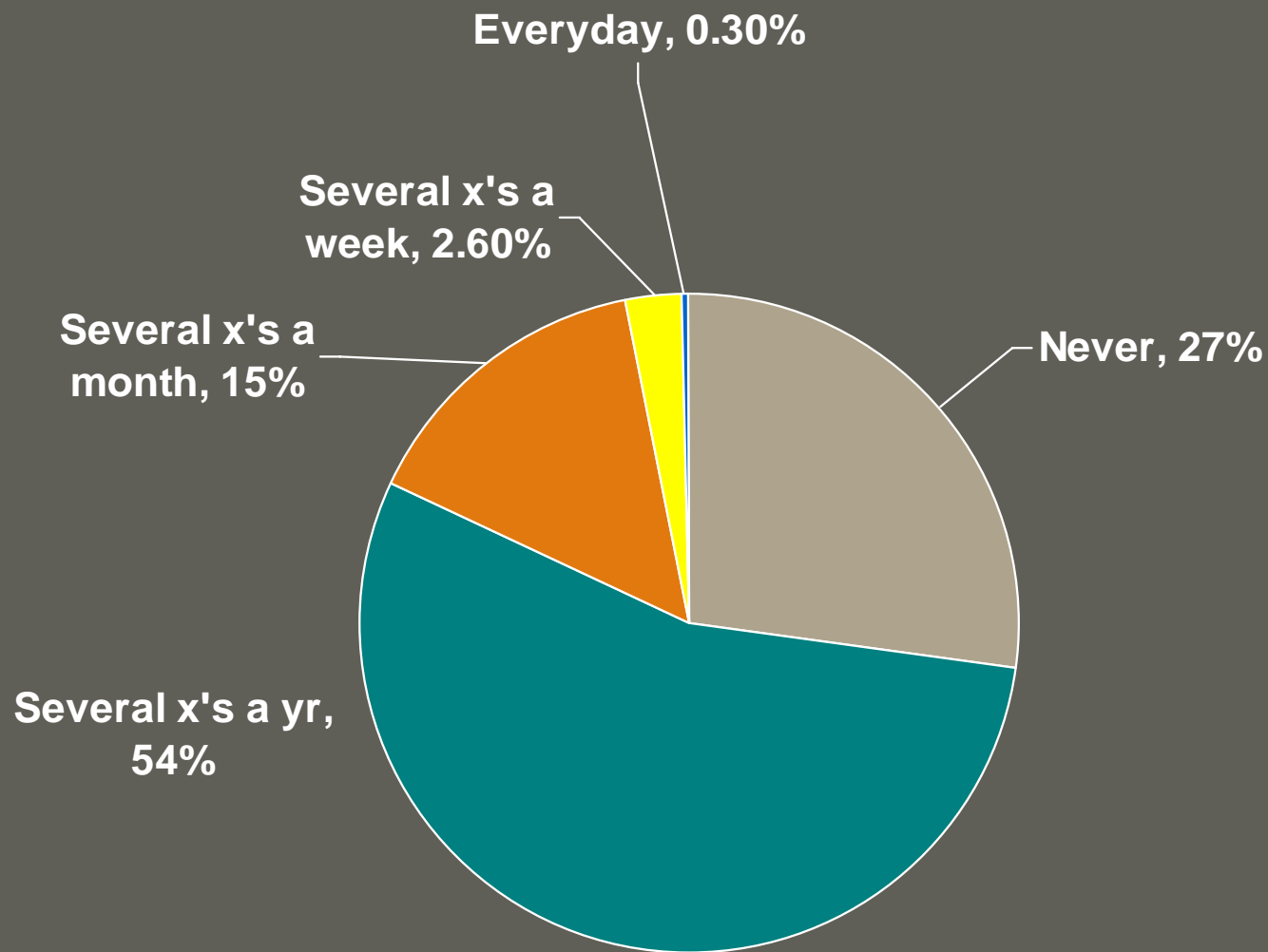
- 77% agree or strongly agree that academic libraries should **educate** faculty about OA
- 75% agree or strongly agree that academic libraries should **educate** campus administration about OA
- 74% agree or strongly agree that academic libraries should **educate** faculty about copyright issues related to faculty's publications
- 70% agree or strongly agree that academic libraries should **include bibliographic records** for OA journals in their library catalogs
- 84% agree or strongly agree that academic libraries should **include links** on their websites to OA journals



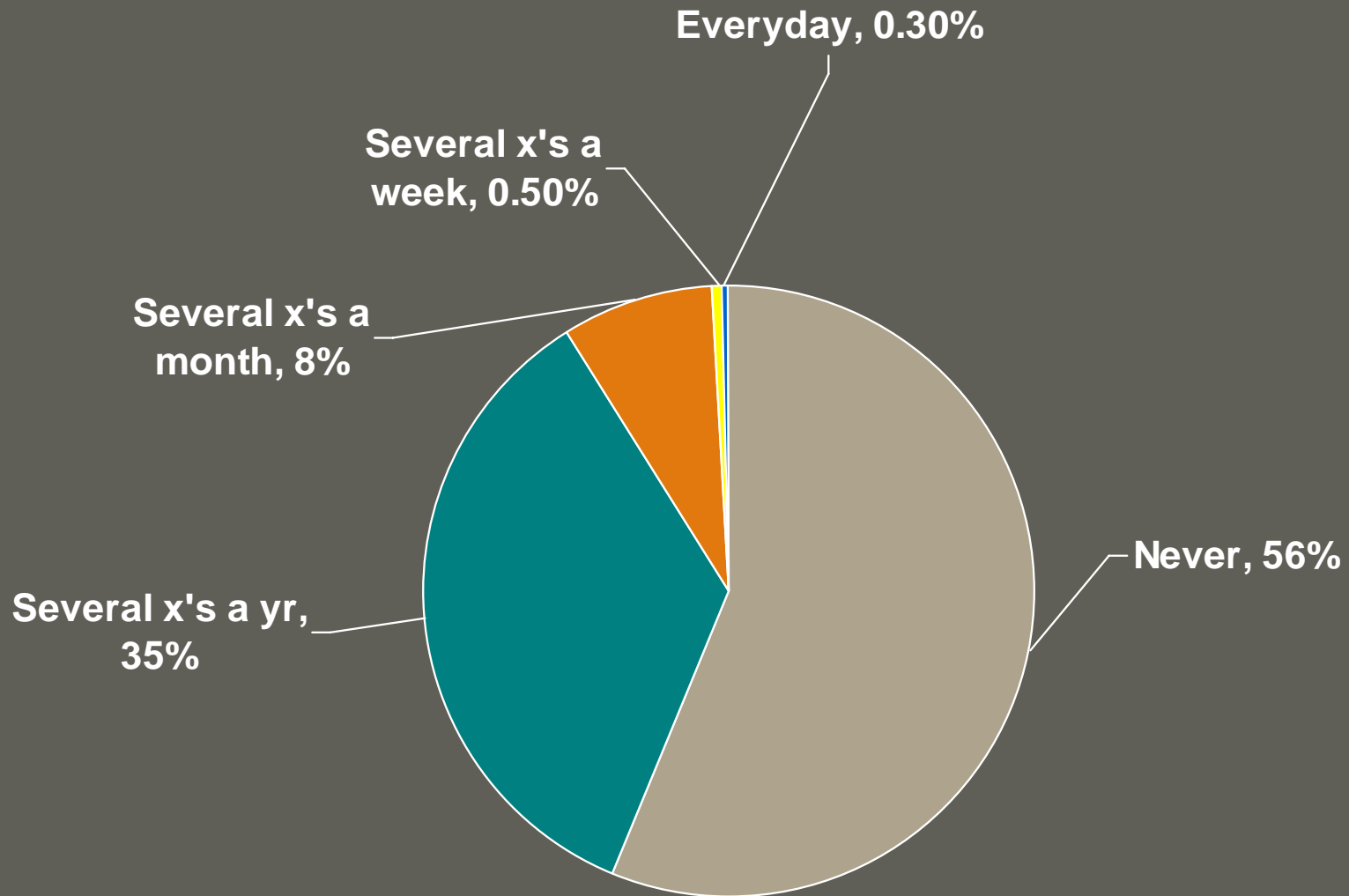
# Education Action Taken

- 21% of respondents' institutions were involved in OA education campaigns
- Only 8 % of respondents personally involved in education campaigns

# Talking about OA with other librarians



# Talking about OA with non-librarian academic professionals





## Actions not fully supported: Financial

- 34% agree or strongly agree that academic libraries should seek **external funding to finance** OA projects
- 21% agree or strongly agree that **providing financial resources** to support OA should be a priority of academic libraries at this point
- 13% agree or strongly agree that academic libraries should **reallocate existing resources** to support the development of OA projects
- 30% agree or strongly agree that academic libraries should **create professional positions** whose main duties concern OA projects



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# Where does this leave us?

In general, respondents believe academic libraries should be involved in changing scholarly communication and that the principles of OA are aligned with the mission of academic libraries. BUT, at the same time, respondents do not believe that libraries should contribute to the movement financially.

# Where does this leave us?, con't.

Respondents support the idea of academic libraries providing OA education and access to OA resources.

SO, is this what OA proponents in academic libraries should focus their efforts on (low lying fruit)?

Or, being a grassroots movement, should proponents continue to push on all fronts until ideological and financial support comes around?

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# Where does this leave us?, con't.

Even though most respondents had positive attitudes about OA, acquisitions and public services librarians had less positive attitudes.

- Should proponents work on convincing them?
- Do they have valid reservations that would help proponents understand why OA does not resonate with some faculty?

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# Where does this leave us?, con't.

More than half of respondents involved in OA projects think there should be a position in the library dedicated to OA

- Whose job is it really?

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# Where does this leave us?, con't.

Most respondents said libraries should provide access to OA journals via the OPAC or website

- Does the profession need to develop standards or disseminate best practices to help with this?

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# Encore: Future studies

- Replicate current study
- Look at certain aspects more closely
- Qualitative study



# Thoughts, Questions?



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